UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

1. What does "Unified Communications" mean?

Unified Communications, or UC for short, is the integration of real-time communication services such as IP (internet protocol) telephony or voice, instant messaging (chat), video conferencing, call control and speech recognition with non real-time communication services such as voicemail, e-mail, text messaging and fax. It operates as a single and seamless communication platform providing a consistent unified user interface, and allows users to communicate in a unified manner across multiple devices. UC will allow employees to communicate through key features such as voice, meeting place, tele-presence, and single number reach.

See **Glossary of Key Terms** *sheet for a list of all technical definitions.*

2. How is UC different from our current telecommunications system, and why is it better?

Missouri state government currently operates with an antiquated 1960 communications system and infrastructure. The infrastructure that supports Missouri's communications technology is not visible to users and less tangible than a highway system, but certainly not less essential and critical for the continued delivery of governmental services to the citizens of Missouri. This initiative will refresh the network infrastructure and upgrade capacity to position the state for success today, and in the future.

Globally, a significant shift is underway in the telecommunications industry, with many customers transitioning from traditional telephone systems, or analog communications, to internet networks such as Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP), sometimes referred to as Internet Protocol (IP) networks. VoIP runs both voice and data communications over a single network, which can significantly reduce infrastructure costs. Other terms frequently encountered and often used synonymously with VoIP are: IP telephony, internet telephony, voice over broadband (VoBB), broadband telephony, and broadband phone.

*See* **Glossary of Key Terms** *sheet for a list of all technical definitions.*

See **Questions 3 and 6** *for more information on new system benefits for the State of Missouri and for all state employees.*

3. Why is the State deploying a new communications system?

Foremost, access to this modern communication system is imperative to enhancing the state's vital responsiveness to emergency situations such as natural disasters, pandemics or terrorist threats. Other key motives and benefits to the State of Missouri and citizens include:

Replacing an Outdated Communications Infrastructure
This is an investment in the state's communication infrastructure. Just as MoDOT must continually maintain, repair and update roads and bridges, this initiative will bring Missouri state government communications from 1960 to 2010, by refreshing the network infrastructure and upgrading capacity to position the state for success today, and in the future. While users can see the wear and tear on physical
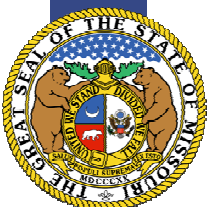
structures, the infrastructure that supports Missouri's communications technology is not visible to users and less tangible, but certainly not less essential and critical for the continued delivery of governmental services to the citizens of Missouri.

*See **Question 2** for more information on converting from an outdated to modern communication infrastructure and system.*

Saving State Tax Dollars

Missouri currently supports four, independent communications networks – data, voice, mobility and video. These will be converted into one unified system. There are limitations and costs associated with managing these separate networks. One network covering data, voice, video, security, wireless and other systems will result in lower capital and operating costs, and in challenging budget years, will assist the State of Missouri in doing more with less.

*See **Question 5** for more information on savings.*

Increasing Operational and Workforce Productivity Efficiencies

Unified Communications will increase organizational productivity, deliver public services more quickly, efficiently and effectively and drive new opportunities for economic development. A plethora of public and private organizations across the nation have already adopted this system, with proven increased operational efficiencies and workforce productivity.

*See **Question 6** for more information on increased operational efficiencies and employee productivity.*

Greening

UC will allow the State of Missouri to reduce its travel expenditures for meetings and trainings across the state. In the future, it may also potentially allow for the reduction of office space.

Operating in Real-Time

The state's communications efforts will no longer operate in departmental silos. Most importantly, this new system will also allow for more citizen and business-centric instantaneous interactions. It will allow employees to access real-time information anytime, anyplace from a variety of devices - integrated into one, resulting in better service and responsiveness to the public.

4. How is the State of Missouri paying for the new system?

The State of Missouri is investing in improving the state's communication infrastructure to meet the needs of Missouri's citizens today, tomorrow and in the future WITHOUT an influx of new cash. The state will be able to finance through approximately, a 7-year lease/purchase contract.

*See **Questions 5 and 6** for more information on direct and indirect savings.*

5. How much money will this initiative save the State?

Projected savings over 10 years is expected to be $30 million, as compared to our present day system. That equates to a savings of 18%, and a return on investment (ROI) of 100%. Likewise, the payback period for the project is 50.4 months.

Moreover, indirect savings include increased productivity and savings in time and expenses when employees can meet via video conferencing, rather than traveling to various locations. Although travel has been significantly reduced for state employees, business must continue as usual. The teleconference feature will serve this need.

*See **Question 6** for more information on indirect savings.*

6. As a State employee, how will this new system help me to do my job better?

UC will increase organizational productivity, allow for delivery of public services more quickly, efficiently and effectively and drive new opportunities for economic development. A plethora of public and private organizations across the nation have already adopted this system, with proven increased operational efficiencies and workforce productivity. Some examples include:

- 60% of users save 20 minutes per employee daily, by reaching workers on the first try

- 46% of users realize travel savings of more than five days per employee annually (via Telepresence)

- 50% of users save 20 minutes per employee daily from more efficient Message management

- More than 75% experienced improved productivity of employees across geographically-dispersed locations due to voice and video-conferencing

- In a recent global survey of frequent users of telepresence or videoconferencing solutions, 90% cite video collaboration technologies save them at least two hours of valuable work time a week

- In addition, one-third of respondents estimate they save close to one full day - seven hours or more - per week. That adds up to more than two months of time a single employee can gain back over the course of a year

7. When will I receive my new UC device?

UC conversion kickoff began Oct 2010 and will continue through Summer 2011. Initially, 8,100 telephones in Jefferson City will be converted. Other autonomous branches of government will have the opportunity to participate subsequently. The Legislature, as well as the judiciary and other statewide elected officials are not participating initially, but may elect to join in the future. (Several agencies, including MoDOT (4,000 users) and the Missouri Highway Patrol (1,300 users) have already successfully adopted UC previously.)

A schedule of specific department and agency deployment is not available, but you will be notified via your department executive leadership and by the UC team via email of your pending device arrival. The UC team will deliver an email within a week or two of your official UC installation. This email will also outline dates and registration information for formal UC training. Watch your emails!

See **Question 8** *for more information on available system training and education.*

8. Will the State offer training on the new system, and where can I learn more?

Yes, formal face-to-face training will be offered. The UC team will notify you via email within a week or two prior to your office's official installation. This email will also outline possible dates and registration information for formal UC training. Watch your emails!

In the interim, you may familiarize yourself with UC features and capabilities online at www.oa.mo.gov. We realize everyone's learning style is different. Likewise, you might embrace and approach technology vastly different from your colleague(s). Thus, a variance of educational tools has been developed by the State of Missouri to showcase the full spectrum of UC and assist all employees with early

adoption. From the UC web portal, where a plethora of short tip sheets to more comprehensive manuals are housed for your convenience, to formal face-to-face training sessions, our goal is to ensure a pleasurable experience through the conversion period.

Nonetheless, we recognize that some employees will only fully embrace the new system once they have the device physically in their possession and software installed on their PC, and can start actively experimenting and practicing daily tasks, rather than reading or learning about them via any educational materials.

Whatever type of learner you might be, rest assured that you will have an opportunity to engage and will have the ongoing support of the UC team in OA-ITSD to help you transition to the new system most easily and effectively.

9. Who are the State's partners?

The State of Missouri is partnering with Cisco and World Wide Technology (WWT) to deploy UC. Cisco is recognized as a world leader in this technology technically referred to as Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP). They will provide the equipment, while WWT, a Missouri-based MBE certified company, will provide the engineering support. Both have an existing state contract which allows the state to proceed quickly. OA-ITSD will work closely with these partners to ensure successful deployment of the communication technology platform and system, while training for state employees will be provided internally.

~ For More General UC Information ~

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~ For Technical Assistance ~

UC Team

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